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Letter dated 29 August 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward a copy of a set of recommendations from the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa which have been agreed to by members of the Security Council during informal consultations in July and August 2002 (see annex).

I kindly request you to circulate this letter with the attached recommendations as a Security Council document.

(*Signed*) J. **Koonjul**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict
Prevention and Resolution in Africa

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Annex to the letter dated 29 August 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa to the Security Council

I. Recommendations on the Group of Friends

1. The Ad Hoc Working Group based its discussion on background information provided by the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat on the working of the group of Friends of the Secretary-General, as well as experiences of Member States who had launched similar informal groups of friends. Members agreed to recommend this idea for adoption by the Security Council on the following basis:

(a) The concept of the group of Friends could provide a useful and informal framework for more in-depth discussion of issues of which the Security Council is seized. Such a framework would not replace the Security Council, but could facilitate the work of the Council by enabling more extensive analysis of issues, especially as the Council often lack sufficient time to fully discuss and analyse issues before taking critical decision. It would be a complement to the efforts of the Security Council;

(b) The group would work best when it is relatively small (about 12 to 15 members), but would remain open to all members. The composition and size of each group would depend on the issue under discussion and the spread of interested parties. The group could include, as appropriate, neighbours of countries whose conflict situation is under consideration;

(c) It would be desirable to have a lead nation, which would be the convener/coordinator of such a group. The post of convener/coordinator could rotate, if desired, but after a minimum period of one year. The convener/coordinator will act as the catalyst in the deliberations of the group and the implementation of its conclusions;

(d) The group should have clarity of objectives, with the deliberations focused on specific topics or issues. The group works best when it focuses on the implementation of agreements already reached by Parties to a conflict. Care should be taken to avoid open-ended issues or discussions. The key purpose of such groups should be clearly defined and accepted by all.

II. Recommendations on cooperation with the African Union

2. The Ad Hoc Working Group extensively discussed the question of enhancing cooperation between the Security Council and the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union. During the consideration of this item, the Ad Hoc Working Group heard the views of the Permanent Observer of OAU to the United Nations. The Group decided that the following measures could enhance cooperation between the Security Council and the African Union:

(a) Circulation of relevant decisions of the central organ of the African Union through the Presidency to Council members for their information;

(b) Facilitation of periodic interaction and dialogue between the Council and members of the central organ and, eventually, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, with the secretaries-general of the two institutions, and in formal meetings of the Security Council. Interaction between the Working Group and the Office of the African Union in New York;

(c) Regular briefing by the special representatives of the secretaries-general and the special envoys of the two organizations, preferably carried out jointly;

(d) Possibility of appointing joint special envoys for African conflicts in the future;

(e) Ensuring of close consultation with the African Union before and after Security Council missions in Africa;

(f) Consideration of the possibility of including, where desirable, a representative of the secretariat of the African Union in Security Council missions to Africa;

(g) The Security Council may consider, where possible or desirable, the despatch of joint Security Council/African Union missions to the field;

(h) Cooperation with the African Union in the field of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, within the process of conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building.

III. Recommendations on Guinea-Bissau

3. The Ad Hoc Working Group held a rich exchange of views on Guinea-Bissau with the participation of the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Peace Academy and the Permanent Representative of the Gambia as Chair of the Group of Friends on Guinea-Bissau. The participants discussed the current peace-building needs of Guinea-Bissau and the obstacles which were being encountered by that country in addressing these needs. Members of the Ad Hoc Working Group agreed to recommend the following to the Security Council:

(a) The Economic and Social Council could be invited to play an important role in the process of peace-building in Guinea-Bissau. In this regard, the Economic and Social Council would be willing to conduct a diagnostic of priorities for designing a strategic long-term planning for Guinea-Bissau which could serve the basis for lasting peace in the country;

(b) The President of the Security Council could address letters to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank requesting them to show flexibility in providing much needed assistance to Guinea-Bissau. The financial institutions could be called upon to find a way to strike a balance between the need for macroeconomic stability and peace-related priorities of Guinea-Bissau;

(c) The Security Council could assist in the political mobilization for funding by requesting the donor community to provide economic and financial assistance to Guinea-Bissau on the basis of a step-by-step approach which would help in capacity-building. The step-by-step approach could minimize risk and match it with the low absorption capacity of Guinea-Bissau. This will provide a way out of the inter-dependency of peace and development;

(d) A lead nation does make a difference in helping the peace process. A powerful lead nation makes an even greater difference. The Gambia is right now playing the role of the lead nation and the Security Council could invite influential States to complement the efforts of the Group of Friends in galvanizing support and commitment for Guinea-Bissau from the international community;

(e) The need for technical assistance for capacity-building has been identified. The Security Council could encourage the UNDP and the international financial institutions to consider, in consultation with the Government of Guinea-Bissau, ways of strengthening the capacities of the Government in economic and financial management, as well as other priority sectors. In this regard, the United Nations Development Programme and the international financial institutions could be requested to consider the secondment of high-level experts;

(f) The Security Council could call for the disbursement of pledges made at the last round-table meeting on international assistance to Guinea-Bissau. The Ad Hoc Working Group believes that it is high time to call for the second round-table meeting of donors. The Ad Hoc Working Group, the Group of Friends, the Economic and Social Council, UNDP and the Secretariat propose to work together with the Government of Guinea-Bissau in this regard.